

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Across the United States and around the world, natural disasters occur each day, as they have for thousands of years. As the world's population and development have increased, so have the effects of these natural disasters. The time and money required to recover from these events often strain or exhaust local resources. The purpose of hazard mitigation planning is to identify policies, actions, and tools for implementation that will, over time, work to reduce risk and the potential for future losses. Hazard mitigation is best realized when community leaders, businesses, citizens, and other stakeholders join together in an effort to undertake a process of learning about hazards that can affect their area and use this knowledge to prioritize needs and develop a strategy for reducing damages.

Section 322, Mitigation Planning, of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act ("the Stafford Act"), enacted by Section 104 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 ("DMA 2000"), provides new and revitalized approaches to mitigation planning. Section 322 continues the requirement for a State mitigation plan as a condition of disaster assistance, and establishes a new requirement for local mitigation plans. In order to apply for Federal aid for technical assistance and post-disaster funding, local jurisdictions must comply with DMA 2000 and its implementing regulations (44 CFR Part 201.6).

While Nassau County has always sought ways to reduce their vulnerability to hazards, the passage of DMA 2000 helped County officials to recognize the benefits of pursuing a long-term, coordinated approach to hazard mitigation through hazard mitigation planning. In January of 2003, 32 local officials from Nassau County joined members of the New York State Emergency Management Office (NYSEMO) to conduct an analysis of the County's hazards using the automated program *HAZNY* (Hazards New York, an interactive program developed by the American Red Cross and the NYSEMO to rank a series of 26 hazards). The County also competed nationally for, and was later a recipient of, Fiscal Year 2003 Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the purpose of developing this very hazard mitigation plan.

This **Nassau County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan** has been prepared to meet the requirements of DMA 2000. It represents the collective efforts of citizens, elected and appointed government officials, business leaders, volunteers of non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders. Natural disasters cannot be prevented from occurring. However, over the long-term, the continued implementation of this Plan will gradually, but steadily, lessen the impacts associated with hazard events.

The Nassau County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan has been developed by the Nassau County Hazard Mitigation Planning Group (the "Planning Group"), with support from outside consultants. The efforts of the Planning Group were headed by the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management's Hazard Mitigation Coordinator. The overall Planning Group was divided into a Core Planning Group and three Area Assessment Teams (one for membership from within the boundaries of each of the County's three towns: Oyster Bay, Hempstead, and North Hempstead).

The plan development process was initiated with an informational meeting on June 16, 2004. The process began in earnest with the Planning Group's Kickoff Meeting on October 20, 2005. Thereafter, the Core Planning Group met on November 14, 2005 and January 12, 2006. The North Hempstead Area Assessment Team met on November 17, 2005. The Oyster Bay and Hempstead Area Assessment Teams met separately on November 28, 2005. The full Planning Group met again on March 9, 2006 and June 6, 2006.

Community support is vital to the success of any hazard mitigation plan. The Planning Group provided opportunities for participation and input of the public and other stakeholders throughout the plan

development process, both prior to this Draft and before approval of the Final plan, allowing citizens to take part in the decisions that will affect their future. Press advisories were released for each of the Area Assessment Team meetings. A public notice providing an overview of the plan development process and where to go for additional information was published in *Newsday* on February 2, 2006. Nine document repositories were established in the Fall of 2005. In a new mitigation planning section of the Nassau County web site, the NCOEM posted information on the plan development process and where to go for additional information or comments beginning in the Fall of 2005; this web site is updated regularly. Area Assessment Team members reached out to the public and other stakeholders within their respective jurisdictions to get the word out through various means including legal notices, press releases, fact sheets, web site links, letters, and mitigation plan booth information at local fairs/conferences.

The hazard mitigation planning process consisted of the following key steps:

- Researching a full range of natural hazards to identify which hazards could affect the County;
- Identifying the location and extent of hazard areas;
- Identifying assets located within these hazard areas;
- Characterizing existing and potential future assets at risk;
- Assessing vulnerabilities to the most prevalent hazards; and
- Formulation and prioritization of goals, objectives, and mitigation actions to reduce or avoid long-term vulnerabilities to the identified hazards.

Natural hazards that can affect Nassau County that were studied in detail in the Plan are as follows:

- Coastal erosion
- Wave action;
- Earthquakes;
- Floods;
- Landslides;
- Drought;
- Severe weather events such as Hurricanes, Tornadoes, and Winter Storms/Ice Storms; and
- Extreme winds.

After evaluating these hazards and assets within the County to which they are vulnerable, the Planning Group developed a mitigation strategy to increase the disaster resistance of the County, along with procedures for monitoring, evaluating and updating the Plan to ensure that it remains a “living document.”

This Draft Plan is currently under review by the Planning Group, NYSEMO, FEMA, and the public and other stakeholders. Later, comments will be incorporated, and the County and all participating jurisdictions will each formally adopt the Final Plan. The Final Plan will include copies of adoption resolutions following Page i.

If you have any questions or comments on the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan for Nassau County, New York, additional information can be obtained by contacting:

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